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Jackson Says He Has 'Rhinoceros Skin,' Blasts 'Mr. Eminem' In Interview

Singer says he feels like a 'target' in interview airing Saturday.
By Gil Kaufman
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In an interview slated to air on Saturday night, Michael Jackson says he feels like a "target" because of his celebrity and that the sensational reports about him in the media are "fiction." He also lashed out at Eminem for mocking him in the "Just Lose It" video, and talked of encouraging his sister Janet after her wardrobe incident at last year's Super Bowl.

In a rare break from the gag order imposed on the case by Superior Court Judge Rodney Melville in Jackson's trial on charges of child molestation, Jackson was allowed to tape the interview with FOX News' Geraldo Rivera two weeks ago (see [article id="1496089"]"Judge Allows Michael Jackson To Speak On TV Regarding Allegations"[/article]).

"The bigger the star, the bigger the target," Jackson said in the interview, according to excerpts released by FOX News. "I'm not trying to say I'm the super-duper star, I'm not saying that. I'm saying that people come at celebrities. We're targets. But truth always prevails. I believe in that." Jury selection in the trial will continue on Monday, when Jackson's lawyers and prosecutors will begin questioning the pool of 250 potential jurors.

Though he reportedly does not speak directly about the case due to the gag order, Jackson decried the difficulty of living his life in the public eye and the personal toll it has taken on him. "I know eventually the truth will prevail and I'm about truth," he said. "I've become immune in a way, too. I have rhinoceros skin, but at the same time I'm human. So, anything can hurt like that, but I'm very strong."

Jackson said that watching the press coverage of his life is like "looking at a fictitious movie. Because it's fiction. It's like watching science fiction. It's not true."

The alleged abuse of the teenager at the center of the case is said to have taken place at Jackson's Neverland Valley Ranch, which the singer referred to as his "world behind the gates."

"I created Neverland as a home for myself and my children," he said, adding that it gave him a chance to relive the childhood he missed out on because he was constantly on tour with his brothers in the Jackson 5.

"This allowed me to have a place behind the gates where the entire world I love is there ... other men have their Ferraris and their airplanes or helicopter or wherever they find their bliss," he said. "My bliss is in giving and sharing and having simple, innocent fun."

The ranch is also a place for inner-city children to experience the joys of seeing the mountains, riding on a carousel and petting horses and llamas, Jackson explained.

"If I can open my gates and see that bliss, an explosion of screaming laughter from the children as they run on the rides, I say, 'Thank you God,' " he said. "I feel I won God's smile of approval, because I'm doing something that brings joy and happiness to other people."

Referring to him as "Mr. Eminem," Jackson decried the rapper's mocking of him in the video for "Just Lose It," in which Eminem impersonates the pop star cavorting with children, having his nose fall off and raps about Jackson inviting children to sit on his lap.

"I've been an artist most of my life and I've never attacked a fellow artist," Jackson said. "Great artists don't do that. You don't have to do that."

As for sister Janet's "wardrobe malfunction" during the 2004 Super Bowl, Jackson said, "Actually, I was looking right at it and I didn't see it ... [I told her to] be strong. This too shall pass. Don't worry about it. I've seen worse things."

For full coverage of the Michael Jackson case, see [article id="1480530"]"Michael Jackson Accused."[/article]